

**Office of Economic Development
Economic Development Advisory Board
MEETING MINUTES**

Date: October 7, 2008: **Time:** 7:30 A.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Christian Alder
Dale Easter
Jared Langkilde
Jim LeCheminant
Jo Wilson
Steve Wood

EX-OFFICIO

Mayor Scott Smith
Chris Brady (excused)
Charlie Deaton
Jeff Crockett
Steve Shope

STAFF PRESENT

Betsy Adams
Shelly Allen
William Jabjiniak
Mike James
Shea Joachim
Jodie Sorrell

MEMBERS ABSENT

Rich Adams (excused)
Brian Campbell (excused)
Theresa Carmichael (unexcused)
Steve Parker (excused)

GUESTS

Winsome Bowen
Wulf Grote

1. Chair's Call To Order

Vice-Chair Jim LeCheminant called the October 7, 2008 meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Board to order at 7:31 A.M. at the City of Mesa Council Chambers, Lower Level, 57 E. 1st Street, Mesa, Arizona 85201.

2. Approval of Minutes from September 2, 2008 board meeting.

Vice-Chair LeCheminant called for a motion to approve the minutes from the meeting held on September 2, 2008.

MOTION: Dale Easter moved that the minutes from September 2, 2008 be approved as written.

SECOND: Christian Alder

DECISION: Passed unanimously

3. Items from Citizens Present

No comments.

4. Central Mesa High Capacity Transit Tier 2 Analysis Update

Mr. Mike James, Deputy Director of Transportation, stated that this presentation is to update the Board on the High Capacity Transit Study. On, Tuesday, October 14, 2008 a

Public Meeting will be held to update the public with information that will be presented today. He introduced Mr. Wulf Grote, Metro's Director of Project Management and Ms. Winsome Bowen, Deputy Project Manager.

Mr. Grote introduced Ms. Winsome Bowen, Deputy Project Manager, also a presenter for the update. He stated that eighteen (18) months ago an Alternative Study was started to determine high capacity transit alternatives for Main Street. Metro was charged with developing a fifty seven (57) mile High Capacity Transit System. The first twenty (20) miles of the Light Rail Transit is due to open on December 27, 2008. The Central Mesa project is to extend a High Capacity Transit system another three (3) miles to downtown Mesa with a completion date of 2015. The extension for Central Mesa will be funded by Proposition 400 that was passed in 2004, and also a share of Federal funds.

One of the elements of the Alternative Analysis Tier II study is to define the technology or mode of transportation. The three (3) modes to be considered are Light Rail Transit (LRT), Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), or a Baseline Bus with more buses on the streets. The second element of the study is to define the specific route of the transit system. Once the route is defined, the station locations will be determined.

A staff recommendation will be presented in January or February 2009 outlining the final dedicated alignment and technology formulated from the technical evaluation as well as the community input received from the October 14, 2008 public meeting. The staff recommendation will then go through another public review, including City boards and committees, around February or March, 2009 before going to the City Council for a formal vote. Once the City Council approves a recommendation, the recommendation goes to Metro Board of Directors as well as the Maricopa Association of Governments Regional Council to update the regional transportation plan.

Ms. Bowen discussed the following goals of the Project:

- Increase access to regional employment areas for City of Mesa residents.
- Provide improved travel times over local buses
- Provide appropriate transit technology and routes to connect with the Central Phoenix/East Valley Light Rail Transit System.
- Facilitate continued development of a regional and seamless transportation system.
- Attract new transit riders onto the growing regional system.
- Support economic development.

She stated that the scope of work during the Tier I portion of the analysis, Metro was concentrating on the alignment of the proposed extension of the transit system from Sycamore east to Horne. In the Tier II analysis the focus has been Main Street between Sycamore and Country Club Drive and three (3) alternatives through downtown Mesa. A great deal of time and effort has been spent talking with the public. Metro is working with a firm to help them understand economic development opportunities and creating a market analysis for the different technologies. More environmental work and further details on engineering will also be done in order to formulate the project into a new starts report to present to the Federal Transit Administration to consider for funding.

Evaluation Criteria was defined as Follows;

- Rider Benefits: Projected number of riders
- Traffic Issues: Roadway impacts, traffic operations

- Land Use: Compatibility with existing and future
- Economic Development Potential
- Populations Served: Travel markets
- Environmental Issues: Consistency with FTA/NEPA process
- Design & Constructability Issues
- Costs: Capital and Maintenance

More effort has been spent on the downtown evaluation to understand the alternatives, such as what the impacts would be concerning travel lanes and left turns, pedestrian crosswalks, bicycle lanes, on-street parking, existing curbs and sidewalks, landscape, streetscape elements and bulb-outs, access to major destinations and economic development and any of the pedestrian amenities currently in the Downtown Area. Metro has also spent immeasurable time with property owners and tenants along Main Street to understand their concerns which focus mainly around construction impacts and business interruption. All the alternatives being studied do not infringe beyond the curb, thus the alternatives are between the curbs.

The work completed at the end of August 2008 has been City of Mesa coordination with a traffic study and Mesa BRT service, identify and screen Tier 1 alternatives, Tier 1 public meeting in October 2007, identify and refine 2 alternatives, traffic analysis of traffic conditions 2030, stakeholders outreach, initial market assessment, preliminary engineering, utilities, right-of-way, preliminary construction cost estimates and preliminary ridership forecasts.

The Tier II analysis is expected to go to City Council in the first quarter of 2009 with the locally preferred alternative. There are six (6) alternatives to this study. All of the alternatives include Sycamore to Country Club, and then different alternatives for the LRT on First Street and First Avenue from Country Club to Horne. Two-end-of-line station locations are being considered due to some issues at the end of the line at Mesa Drive. There seem to be no ideal locations for a park and ride lot at Mesa Drive. The other location would be at Horne which provided a better opportunity for a park and ride and also keeps the park and ride out of the Town Center.

These are the Tier II Alternatives;

- Sycamore to Horne/Mesa Drive.
 - BRT Main Street – 2 Lane
 - BRT Main Street – 4 Lane
 - LRT Main Street – 2 Lane
 - LRT Main Street – 4 Lane
 - LRT 1st Street
 - LRT 1st Avenue
- Mesa Drive or Horne to Superstition Springs Center
 - Skip-Stop Express BRT

There are four (4) LRT alternatives that are being considered. The first alternative is similar to the BRT in that the LRT would continue from the Sycamore station all the way to Horne in the middle of the street. As with the BRT alternative there would be two (2) lanes of traffic in each direction from Sycamore to Country Club, then transition to one

(1) lane of traffic in each direction from Country Club to Mesa Drive or Horne. This alternative allows the bicycle lane, the on-street parking and curbs to remain where they are.

Alternative two (2) is exactly the same as alternative one (1), except in the Downtown Area from Country Club to Mesa Drive, there would be two (2) lanes of traffic in each direction instead of one (1) lane of traffic in each direction. The bicycle lane would be removed. The on-street parking would be removed from the areas where the stations would be located. With these two (2) alternatives a station would be located near the Mesa Arts Center and east of Mesa Drive. The park and ride would be located at Centennial Way, Mesa Drive and Horne.

The 1st Street alternative is the same between Sycamore and Country Club. However, just east of Country Club the alignment would transition northbound at Morris and then east on to 1st Street. This alternative for LRT will be the most expensive due to property that is needed to be required to transition from Morris to 1st Street. The LRT would be in the center of the street with one (1) lane of traffic in each direction and on-street parking. The stations would be located at Centennial Way, Mesa Drive and Horne.

The 1st Avenue alternative mirrors the 1st Street alignment except that the transition onto Morris is in a public right-of-way with very little property needed to be required to make the turn southbound onto Morris and then east on 1st Avenue. The parking located in the front of a small retail strip center on Morris would be removed as that is a City right-of-way, but there is concern that the removal of the parking could impact the businesses. This alternative is number two (2) as far as cost with Main Street being the least expensive. Some of the stakeholders along 1st Avenue have concerns, especially the Tribune due to the number of trucks coming and going for deliveries, and how a center median alignment would impact the left turns in and out of the driveway to the building.

Metro is also working with the State Historic Preservation Office concerning historic properties along the alignment, particularly related to buildings such as The Landmark Restaurant and Laredo Army Surplus Store at Main and Extension. There should not be any impact to these two (2) buildings other than needing some property to the north of the Landmark Restaurant. The State Historic Preservation Office is concerned with any removal of the electric lighting that is located in the center of Main Street. However, Metro feels that they can utilize the poles for both lighting and the overhead system for the LRT.

Case studies of some of our peer cities that have developed mass transit systems have been conducted to evaluate whether rail has had a positive or negative impact on residential, office and retail property values. Dallas is a better example of a peer city as their land-use patterns are similar to Mesa's. Within a ½ mile walking distance of the rail stations, there has been a property appreciation for residential, office and retail. The Plano, Texas station which is about ten (10) miles from the Dallas center has had a very positive impact on their downtown area.

The estimated capital costs are preliminary and are presented in a range. The BRT alternative is the lesser cost approximately \$50 million to \$60 million dollars depending on the alternative. The LRT alternative for Main Street is the lesser cost of \$185 million to \$225 million dollars to Horne. The cost of the 1st Avenue alternative is between \$225

million to \$234 million dollars. The most expensive alternative is 1st Street at a cost of \$234 million to \$243 million dollars.

The ridership estimates for the three and one half (3 ½) miles of the extension is double on the LRT alternative as to the BRT alternative, with the 1st Avenue ridership slightly higher due to the amount of the zero car households in the areas on the southside of the Town Center.

The schedule for the Tier II Study is as follows:

- Public Meeting – October 2008
- Mesa City Council – October 2008
- Final Definition of Alternatives – Oct-November 2008
- Locally Preferred Alternative – March-April 2009
- Advance Conceptual Engineering – 2009-2010
- Start Preliminary Engineering – July 2010

Mr. Deaton asked if the ridership numbers are based on capacity or how it is determined.

Ms. Bowen responded that it is based on current population, projected population, current ridership and results of surveys that are conducted locally to determine the propensity or the likelihood that local residents would use transit.

Mr. Grote commented that the numbers that are generated from this are kept for us at the Maricopa Association of Governments. They have a regional transportation planning model that generates the traffic numbers for automobiles as well as for public transportation. They have a series of models that they utilize including land-use and densities, travel times and a number of things that impact the overall ridership.

Mr. Langkilde requested a copy of the presentation. He also commented that on a slide under the Purpose statements the first bullet statement makes it sound as though Mesa is in the business of exporting jobs. It was suggested that the slide be modified to drop the location that people can use rapid transit or light rail to connect to jobs.

Ms. Bowen responded that the slide would be modified to read as a two (2) way exchange of job creation.

5. Directors Report

Mr. Jabjiniak commented that at the last meeting there was a discussion over the comparison items and to have the opportunity to be able to compare some Quick Facts about where Mesa stands compared to the region and State. Mr. Shea Joachim has put together some Quick Facts information sheets.

Mr. Joachim walked the Board through the data comparison sheets by NAICS Sectors. He stated that it is very difficult to find accurate data at the six (6) digit NAICS level. It is difficult to find wage or sales data on one (1) particular business, but from a Sector level it is easy and has more accurate data. The first page is comparing Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale MSA, the second page compares Maricopa County, the third page compares

Mesa with the State, and the fourth page compares State-County-City. The data also compares the Median Age, % of high School Graduates, % of Bachelors Degree or higher, Average Household Income, Median Household Income, Median household Value, % Unemployed, % Owner-Occupied, and the % of Renter-Occupied Units. There is a Mesa Workforce Breakdown, Maricopa County Workforce Breakdown, and an Arizona Workforce Breakdown. The data is from the fourth quarter of 2006 to the third quarter of 2007.

Mr. Shope commented that a statistic that he would like to see added is the employment figure multiplied by the average annual earnings.

Mr. Easter would like to see the comparison of the top 50 cities to see where Mesa ranks nationally.

Mr. Jabjiniak commented that the Committee Structure is being revised to consolidate from seven (7) to only three (3) or four (4) Sub-Committees. The restructuring will be ready for the November meeting. Any thoughts or feedback please let him know.

The Handbook for EDAB should be done for the November meeting. Also the EDAB contact list was partially updated with a new email address for Dale Easter. The City has a new email address. A current revised contact list will be sent electronically to the EDAB members to include the new City email address.

Mr. Jabjiniak also announced a new partnership with the Chamber of Commerce with the Business Visitation Program. Mr. Deaton's staff and our own staff have been working hard to go after approximately 72 visits within a two (2) month period. There are twelve (12) teams of two (2) people doing six (6) visits each. This is a great opportunity to reach out to the business community, hear some of the concerns, establish relationships and take the feedback and respond to it.

Mr. Deaton thanked Ms. Lois Yates from the Falcon Field Area Alliance and who is the Vice-President of the Economic Development Committee on the Chamber of Commerce Board. She is the primary person responsible for putting this partnership program together. He also thanked the business leadership that came forward to make the visits and the city staff.

Mr. Jabjiniak announced a groundbreaking on October 6, 2008 for Waxie Sanitary Supply. The groundbreaking is in the Falcon Field area for eighty (80) new jobs.

6. Project update on Fiesta District Design Guidelines

Postponed until the November 4, 2008 meeting.

7. Other Business

Mayor Smith commented on the Metro update in the Downtown area. What he is seeing as the Metro is proceeding is this is an issue that brings out a lot of passion in people. The passion is directed as to how it is going to affect "me" in the short term. The location of LRT regardless of where it goes is going to change downtown just like it is

going to change wherever it runs. The question arises as to how to maximize the positive to turn it into an economic development issue and help to make development happen. The Mayor hopes that EDAB will be involved in an active discussion as to the implications that LRT and BRT has for the downtown area and the opportunity to redefine how economic development is looked at.

Mr. Jabjiniak commented that the Cardinale Auto Dealership is continuing to move forward and will go to the City Council in November. Moving to November will enable Cardinale more time to work with the neighbors in the surrounding area in order for the process to move forward.

Vice-Chair LeCheminant reminded the EDAB members of the next scheduled meeting on November 4, 2008.

8. Adjournment

Vice-Chair LeCheminant adjourned the meeting at 8:28 a.m.

Submitted By:

William J. Jabjiniak
Economic Development Department Director
(Prepared by Betsy Adams)